

FREEDOM AFLOAT.

By M. QUAD.

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The strong minded Mrs. Graham and four other strong minded sisters in the faith had chartered the houseboat Freedom for a cruise of a month on the bay and were ready to start. Not a man was to be allowed on board; not even a boy was to be allowed to fish near the craft. It was to be independence of the male sex pure and simple. The five husbands of the five strong minded women had raised no objections. They had simply smiled and winked at each other.

The tug left the houseboat at anchor forty rods from a wooded shore. The women bossed the job, and the tug captain obeyed instructions. The anchor was hardly down when five voices began chanting their relief at having arrived where man was not. They had escaped him. They could stand on the burning deck and defy him—no more thralldom and oceans of liberty for a month.

This state of relief and hilarity and general good feeling continued for fifty minutes by the clock in the cabin. Then Mrs. Perkins discovered a cockroach. It was not a monster of malignancy, but still it was a cockroach. Its discovery ought to have been the merest trifle compared to the emancipation of woman after 6,000 years of servitude, but the dignity Mrs. Perkins clean forgot to look at it in that way. In fact, she said that she wouldn't have come if she had known that a cockroach was coming too.

It was just ten minutes later when Mrs. Smith discovered flies and bugs—flies and bugs coming in clouds from the shore and that the insects had teeth or stingers. Then Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Davis asked for fishlines and learned that no one had thought to provide them. The talk was blending into acrimony when Mrs. Graham called a meeting of the society and presented the following preamble and resolution:

Whereas, Woman has at last emerged from a state of servitude lasting since the days of Adam and Eve; and

Whereas, She has now become the superior of man and no longer needs his assistance in any direction; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the sense of this meeting is that we proceed to show the world at large, but particularly the male sex, that we are equal to any emergency.

The resolution was adopted without a dissenting vote, and for an hour a holy calm reigned. Then, in stirring away the groceries, it was discovered that neither salt nor baking powder had been brought along. Mrs. Perkins and Mrs. Smith had quite a few plain words over it, and when Mrs. Graham threatened to call another meeting of the society they were silenced.

On the second day several more things happened. It was discovered that the craft leaked and no one knew how to work the pump. Under the brisk wind she dragged her anchor and grounded on a mud flat. Five hundred more cockroaches appeared to see what what it was all about. The tide brought in a big log, which insisted on bumping the houseboat at the rate of five bumps a minute, and the forehanded skippers didn't wait for the going down of the sun. The five women staggered through the day, and as they arose from a poorly cooked dinner Mrs. Smith, with a look of rebellion on her face, ventured to make the general inquiry:

"Has woman actually been emancipated from the thralldom of man, or does she still depend on him just a little bit?"

"Mrs. Smith, I shall call a meeting of the society in just five minutes," exclaimed Mrs. Graham in reply.

"But let us look facts in the face," suggested Mrs. Davis.

"We are on a mud flat," replied Mrs. Brown.

"And who can get us off but men?" solemnly asked Mrs. Perkins.

"And who can pump out the water?"

"And get us home?"

"Man! Man! Man! Man!"

"Ladies," said Mrs. Gleason, "are you ready, after fighting for 6,000 years for your rights and winning them at last, to surrender to your arch enemy because of an emergency—two or three simple emergencies?"

"We are!"

"Then you are cowards and deserve the heel of the tyrant on your neck! Good Lord, what's that?"

Two things had happened. The waterlogged houseboat had given a lurch and settled a foot deeper into the mud and a young man had come alongside in a boat and was yelling at them:

"Say, you women, there's going to be a gale, and your craft will either be pounded to pieces here or driven out into the bay. Shall I set you ashore?"

"Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!" from four voices.

"Ladies, let us do things in order," chided Mrs. Graham. "I call the meeting to order and present the following:

"Whereas, Perhaps the day of rejoicing for our sex has not yet arrived, and,

"Whereas, We have been mistaken in our deductions regarding men; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That we take advantage of the kind offer extended us to go ashore and go home. All in favor say aye."

Four years at once and a second later a fifth.

"How five women could be such idiots beats me!" growled the man as he set them ashore.

No meeting of the society was called to answer him. It had been dissolved. And when the five husbands at home heard of it they nudged each other and winked and grinned as hard as they could.

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Take LAXATIVE BROMO Quinine Tablets. Druggists refund money if it fails to cure. E. W. GROVE'S signature is on each box. 25c.

MAN AND WIFE FOUND DEAD

Probably Rev. William Ritter and Wife Were Murdered

AT WASHINGTON, IND.

Mrs. Ritter's Body Found on Floor of Their Sitting-room, While That of Her Husband Was in Cellar, as if Thrown There.

Washington, Ind., Dec. 24.—Rev. William Ritter and his aged wife were found murdered in their home near Elkhart yesterday afternoon. Mrs. Ritter was found lying full length upon the floor of the sitting-room, her head toward the fireplace and her hair disheveled. She was in her bare feet and had probably made ready to retire when the crime was committed. There are no marks upon her body to indicate how she came to her death, but many believe she was strangled.

The body of the aged minister was found in the cellar at the foot of the stairway, lying in a heap, as if he had been thrown down stairs. Both bodies were stiff and there is no way of telling when the double crime was committed.

They were last seen alive last Friday. The motive for the crime is a mystery, for apparently no attempt at robbery was made. Rev. Ritter, although well to do, never kept much money at his home and what little there was in the house was not disturbed.

DESPERATE DUEL BY YONKERS COUPLE

Emmett Davis Is Hardly Expected to Recover While His Wife Is Seriously Wounded With Knife.

Yonkers, N. Y., Dec. 24.—A man and wife fought a desperate duel with butcher knives here last night, and the husband, Emmett Davis, is not expected to live. After his return from work Davis informed his wife, Ella, that he was going to New York to take in a show. His wife interposed vigorous objections but Davis only laughed. "His good bye," which he chortled, brought the end. His wife could stand it no longer and picking up a knife she made for him, while at the same time her husband grabbed a knife and they clinched.

For five minutes they battled furiously, and the neighbors, who had been attracted to the house by the cries of Mrs. Davis, summoned a policeman and the two duelists were removed to a hospital. The physicians found that Davis had been stabbed six times in the head and that Mrs. Davis was suffering from five stab wounds.

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VERY STUPID OF HIM.

By THOMAS KENT WATERMAN.

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A girl sat on the porch of a farmhouse knitting. Up the road came a man. He stopped before the girl, who sat meditating with her eyes on her work. Presently she looked up. Seeing him, a glad smile was about to break out on her lips, but she repressed it.

"Well, I declare!" she exclaimed. "Where did you come from? I'd as soon have expected to see your ghost as you."

"I should have been very much disappointed," replied the man, going up on to the porch and taking a seat, "to see your ghost. I prefer to see you in the flesh."

"Let me see. It must be seven or eight years since you left. You went away the day after I saw you. Didn't you?"

"Yes, I left you standing on this very porch. It was twilight, with a moon in the first quarter. I went down the road, there determined that you should never see me again."

"And what brings you back now?"

"I came to get married."

"He was looking her in the eye. Though inwardly she winced at the information, she succeeded in appearing indifferent to it."

"Who is the happy woman?" she asked.

"I've answered a question. It's my turn to ask one. Are you married?"

"No."

He sat looking at her inquiringly, and she continued:

"There's never been any one here who wanted me."

"Nor any one you wanted."

"That's right."

"Same here. I've remained single since I left you because there was no one I could get that I wished to marry."

"But now you can get the one you want?"

"No, but I must have a companion. I feel myself getting old. I'm thirty-two."

"And I'm thirty."

"So I thought to come back here among the people I was brought up with, marry the first girl I could get and take her back to the most God-forsaken country a woman ever lived in."

"You won't have any trouble getting a girl to go with you, but it's not much of an outlook for her."

"How about me?"

"She'll be constantly mourning for civilization and to see her do so will be very hard on you."

"You wouldn't marry a man who was intending to take you to such a country, would you?"

"Yes, if I loved him."

"And make him miserable by mourning for these beautiful hills?"

"I'd try not."

There was silence for awhile between them, broken by the man.

"Seems to me that if you had got to the state I have, tired of living alone and didn't care whom you married, and I could give up my interest over there you'd fill the bill."

"If I married you I wouldn't let you give up your interest over there, where that is not on my account."

"But you said you'd do that if you loved the man."

"Yes; that's what I said."

"But if you didn't love the man?"

"I wouldn't marry him at all."

Another silence. The man sat tapping his boot with a stick he had cut beside the road.

"I'm sorry about that," he said presently. "I didn't know but that if you felt the same as I do it wouldn't be necessary for me to go any farther for a companion."

"But I don't feel as you do. In your case the romance has passed away, and you merely want some one to keep you from being lonely. I will marry no man I don't love."

He sat for awhile with a disappointed look on his face, then rose to go.

"Singular," he remarked, looking at the sky. "There's the half moon up there, and the twilight's coming on, just the same as when I left you before."

"And you haven't improved a bit since then. In another eight or ten years you'll come back again and talk just as stupidly as you did when I saw you last and as you are talking now."

"Myra, what do you mean?"

The only reply he received was a passionate burst of weeping.

"Myra, sweetheart, do tell me!"

"You went away and have been gone eight years. Why didn't you come back the next day? I expected you and had a little present for you."

"But you refused me."

"That's nothing if I did. You didn't expect me to fall right into your arms at once, did you?"

The man looked at her, on his face an expression of infinite pain mingling with one of infinite pleasure. Then he took her in his arms, and neither spoke for some moments.

"What a stupid jackanapes I have been!" he said at last.

"Spoiled eight years' happiness for both of us."

"What a lucky thing it would have been if in a feminine freak you had accepted me then."

"That would have been very unnatural."

"And me not understanding that you expected me to come back the next day was ridiculous, wasn't it?"

"I should think so."

"Well, you won't have to go out there with me, for I'm not going myself. I've made my pile."

Definition of Tact.

Mrs. Pyne—Mrs. Blank certainly possesses a lot of tact. Mrs. Pyne—What is your definition of "tact"? Mrs. Pyne—Tact is a woman's ability to make her husband believe he is having his own way.—Lippincott's.

SENSATION IN WALL ST.

Transactions in Rock Island Cause Nervousness

SOME ENORMOUS SALES

Much Talk of Scandal—Stock Jumped 31 Points and Then Went Back to Old Figures, All Within a Few Minutes.

New York, Dec. 24.—A startling market movement that had the earmarks of a "corner" came yesterday, when the common stock of the Rock Island company, within five minutes of the opening, rose from 50 1/2 to 81, when it settled back again, after heavy trading, to 50.

This startling advance and reaction caused a fear that a "corner" had been effected in the stock of the Rock Island company.

A block of 1,800 shares was sold at 81, the top price. Rock Island common closed at 49 1/2 last Friday. Fears caused heavy selling throughout the security list and there were numerous declines of from one to three points.

"It seems as if someone had been selling something he did not own," said a director of the Rock Island. "The controlling interests and officials of the company have nothing to do with the spectacular advance, and it looks as if there was a considerable short interest in the stock, and this interest was apparently badly squeezed to-day."

The opening sale of Rock Island was 600 shares at 50 1/2, and then the stock advanced an eighth, a quarter, three-quarters, and then by leaps and bounds to a high price of 81. On the advance, blocks of stocks from 100 to 7,000 shares changed hands.

At the top figure enormous supplies of stock came out and a violent reaction ensued. The decline, however, was much steeper than the advance. Within 15 minutes, the price had fallen back to 50. Traders generally believed that a corner had been engineered in the stock, and there was a general rush to unload securities throughout the speculative list.

The market became quickly unsettled through fears of consequences of a bear panic in Rock Island. Losses ranged from one to three points in active stocks. There was a general unloading of securities, causing acute weakness.

No Good Reason.

The spectacular rise in Rock Island common stock was generally credited to a frightened short interest, since it was quickly recalled that the control of the company does not lie with the common stock, and that therefore any suggestions of competitive bidding by interests seeking to control the property were not to be entertained under the circumstances.

One of the directors of the Rock Island, also connected with the banking interests of the road, said of the movement—

"There is nothing in the affairs of the company to account for the advance of the price of the stock in such a violent manner. It appears to be a squeeze of the shorts."

The officials of the company and other leading interests in the property had nothing to do with the spectacular advance in the stock," continued the director. "London and Paris financial interests have been heavy buyers of the stock recently, and it is reported that their representatives in New York bid for the stock this morning and were, at least, responsible for the result."

Trading in Rock Island common stock in the first 12 minutes approximated 100,000 shares.

Rock Island rallied to 53 1/2, but there was renewed evidence that there were large supplies of that stock in the market and the price ran off again. This served to tranquilize the rest of the market and prices began to recover.

The Man Behind the Gun.

The late Admiral Erben had the good fortune or the merit to originate a world circling phrase, "the man behind the gun." He used it in a speech on the factors of success in naval warfare to emphasize the necessity of having efficiency, preparedness, run through the entire personnel. It was also a reminder that the enlisted men have a good deal more to do with bringing about victory than always appears in history or official reports.

The expression was employed in supplementing the views of Captain Mahan and attained circulation at once as epitomizing a whole library of instruction.—Boston Transcript.

The Waters Under the Earth.

Below a depth of six miles under the surface of the earth's crust it is believed that no water can exist in the rock formations, because the tremendous pressure probably closes all pores. But above that level the quantity of underground water is estimated to be equal to one-third of all the water contained in the oceans. If poured over the land surface of the globe the underground water would, it is affirmed, be sufficient to cover it to a uniform depth of from 3,000 to 3,500 feet.

A Skin of Beauty is a Joy Forever.

D. R. T. Felix Gouraud's Oriental Cream or Magical Beautifier.

Removes Tan, Freckles, Pimples, Moth Patches, Blemishes, Redness, Itch, and every blemish on beauty, and is the best of all skin preparations. It is so simple and so effective that it is a joy to use. It is a skin of beauty is a joy forever.

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MAGAZINE REVIEW

Why We Cannot Regulate the Railroad Rates.

So it is now, so it will be. Whatever business wants it will have, not through the superior or malign wit of any man or any set of men, and not through conscious planning, but because, in the present condition of society, the very first necessity of the nation is the face of business to reduce the tariff is but an example of all attempts to do anything whatsoever, great or small, in opposition to the will of business. Exactly the same fate has attended every such attempt, no matter where made or by whom or when or how or for what purpose. See if I am not right. Who, for example, can, without laughter, contemplate the attempt of the last thirty years to regulate railroad rates and to restrain the corporations? I mean when we come to regard those attempts as they really are, freed from subterfuge and hypocrisy. The Regan bill is succeeded by the Cullum bill, the Cullum bill by the Elkins bill, the Elkins bill by the Hepburn bill, and how futile, absurd and comic looks the whole procession! Not one of them achieving one result, beyond negligible oratory and jobs for the deserving. After it all, American railroad rates remain unregulated and also remain the most arbitrary, unreasonable, illogical rates in the world. Business is opposed to rate regulation; hence, there is none.

The Dread Pellagra.

Pellagra begins in the spring. It brings weakness, lassitude, giddiness, headache, arthritic pains, severe burning sensation in the small part of the back radiating to the limbs, especially the hands and feet. Often the victim is slightly jaundiced.

Last of all, the skin is affected, but limited to the parts exposed to the sun, which turn a deep red. Sometimes this redness develops in twenty-four hours. In some cases, the skin when attacked by the disease develops indolent ulcers and these are always preceded by violent itching and burning. With the subsidence of the acute conditions, the outer layer of the skin scales, and may be rubbed off as if the integument had been covered with bran. Stripped in this manner of its outer coating, the skin appears thick and leathery. For four or five summers this condition may be repeated; the skin grows dry, wrinkled and withered. It is not unlike that seen in extreme old age.